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SYNOPSIS OF THE AFRICAN GREEN SNAKES

(*PHILOTHAMNUS* INC. *CHLOROPHIS*),

WITH THE DESCRIPTION OF A NEW FORM,

by Arthur LOVERIDGE (Cambridge, Mass.).

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An intensive study of the common green snakes of Africa reveals that the genus *Chlorophis* HALLOWELL is untenable. Not only may lateral and notched keels be present or absent on subcaudals of the race *Philothamnus semivariegatus dorsalis*, but keels are occasionally indicated on the subcaudals of *C. heterolepidotus*.

As several years must elapse before publication of the now completed revision of *Philothamnus*, a key to the genus involving a number of taxonomic alterations is offered at this time. My reasons for making these changes will have to await the appearance of the main paper. But I might point out that much confusion has been caused in the past by writers expanding the ventral and subcaudal counts of a species by accepting, without verification, figures attributed to that species by their colleagues, figures based on misprints, miscounts or misidentifications.

Too many herpetologists have accepted a conical point on the end of a tail as evidence that the tail is intact, whereas this is no sure guide. For a tail whose tip has been lost early in life, reproduces the terminal point so well that it is often difficult to decide whether the tail is regenerated or not. The acceptance of subcaudal counts based on these mutilated individuals has resulted in the undue lowering of the figures for many species.

While many museums have generously assisted me by lending material, at this time I would thank only my Belgian colleagues — M. M. POLL, Conservateur at the Musée du Congo Belge and MM. V. VAN STRAELEN, Directeur and G. F. DE WITTE, Conservateur at the Institut royal des Sciences naturelles de Belgique for their kindness in supplying certain critical material from the region of Lake Kivu. This confirms the view that the *Philothamnus heterodermus* from this area have a much higher ventral count than do *Ph. h. heterodermus* or *Ph. h. carinatus* from further west. This new form may be called:

*Philothamnus heterodermus ruandæ* subsp. nov.

Type. — Institut royal des Sciences naturelles de Belgique, I. G. 15860, an adult ♀ from Mulungu, Lake Kivu, Congo Belge, collected by F. L. HENDRICKX in 1947.

Paratypes. — I. G. 16964, a ♀ from Mulungu (F. L. HENDRICKX); I. G. 13304, a ♀ from Kamatembe, Kivu district (G. F. DE WITTE); Chicago Natural History Museum, N° 6975, a ♂ from Lake Kivu (E. HELLER); Museum of Comparative Zoology, N° 42915, a ♀ from Lulenga, Lake Kivu (H. SCHOUTEDEN). To this race also belongs an unsexed snake I have not seen, from the Impenetrable Forest, Kayonza, British Ruanda, south-west Uganda, mentioned by C. R. S. PITMAN as having 181 ventrals and 85 subcaudals. Presumably also I. G. 16287, a ♀, from Mpala (1), Kanzenze region, Lualaba district, Congo Belge (R. P. LEFEBURE).

Diagnosis. — Differs from its nearest relatives (of which I have about 75 and 40 counts respectively) in its more numerous ventrals and larger size, characters best seen in a comparative table.

Species	Midbody scale-rows	Ventrals in ♂♂	Ventrals in ♀♀	Caudals in ♀♀	Caudals in ♂♂	Largest ♀ in mm.
<i>Ph. h. carinatus</i>	13	141-157	145-167	72-86	78-91	815 (600+215)
<i>Ph. h. heterodermus</i>	15	147-160	152-164	80-97	79-94	862 (595+267)
<i>Ph. h. ruandæ</i>	15	174	175-181	82-93	99	962 (730+232)

(1) As Mpala is on the railway between Tenke and Dilolo, this record involves a considerable southward extension of the range. Dr DE WITTE assures me that, though I. G. snakes do not bear individual tags, the locality data is unquestionably correct. Time will show whether this individual is within the range of the new race.



**Description.** — (Paratype variations in parentheses). Preocular 1; postocular 2; temporals 1 + 2 on right, 2 + 2 on left (2 + 2 or 2 + 3 in all paratypes); upper labials 9 (8-10), the fourth, fifth and sixth (third, fourth and fifth or fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh) entering the orbit; lower labials 10 (9-11), the first 5 (4 or 5) in contact with an anterior sublingual; midbody scales smooth, in 15 rows; ventrals 175 (174-181) with lateral keels; anal entire; subcaudals 93 (82-99) rounded.

**Size.** — Total length of holotype ♀ (I. G. 15860, 922 (680 + 242) mm, that of a ♂ (C. N. H. M. 6975), 725 (515 + 210) mm.

#### KEY TO THE SPECIES (2).

1. Subcaudals rounded or angular, occasionally faintly notched, but not so angular as to be called keeled; in most species less than 130 pairs of subcaudals (3) ... .. 2.
- Subcaudals sharply angular (not always so in *Ph. s. dorsalis*) keeled and notched like the ventrals, usually more than 130 pairs ... .. 10.
2. Midbody scale rows 13, very rarely 11... .. 3.  
Midbody scale rows 15, very rarely 13... .. 4.
3. Anal divided, very rarely entire; usually 2 labials entering orbit; temporals 1 + 1 or 1 + 2, rarely 2 + 2; range : montane forests of eastern Tanganyika Territory and a swamp in Zanzibar (? introduced) ... *Ph. macrops* (BOULENGER).  
Anal entire; usually 3 labials entering the orbit; temporals 2 + 2, very rarely 1 + 2, 2 + 1, 2 + 3 or 3 + 2; range : virgin forests of western Kenya (Kaimosi) west through the Congo Belge, northwest to Fernando Po (unknown from west of Cameroons) ... .. *Ph. h. carinatus* (ANDERSSON).
4. Anal entire; subcaudals 79-99; temporals usually 2 + 2, occasionally 1 + 1, 1 + 2, 1 + 3, 2 + 1 or 2 + 3 ... .. 5.  
Anal divided (very rarely entire in *Ph. i. battersbyi*, *Ph. i. irregularis* and *Ph. heterolepidotus*); subcaudals 77-134. 6.

(2) Species or races not included are regarded as synonyms. Before using this key it would be well to sex the material by making a slit on the underside of the base of the tail with a razor blade.

(3) Prior to counting the subcaudals read paragraph three of this paper.

5. Ventrals 147-164; adult ♀♀ attain 862 mm; range : virgin forests of Angola north and west to Portuguese Guinea ...  
 ... .. *Ph. h. heterodermus* (HALLOWELL).  
 Ventrals 174-181; adult ♀♀ attain 962 mm; range : virgin forests of southwest Uganda, Belgian Ruanda and adjacent Congo south to Mpala, near Tenke ... ..  
 ... .. *Ph. h. ruandæ* subsp. nov.
6. Usually 2, though occasionally 3, labials entering orbit; range : eastern half of Africa ... .. 7.  
 Usually 3, though occasionally 2, labials entering orbit; range : western Africa penetrating the east only in the Nyasa-Zambezi region ... .. 8.
7. Subcaudals in ♀♀ 77-90, in ♂♂ 88-106; range : eastern Africa south of the Usambara Mtns. in Tanganyika Territory, south through Mozambique and the Rhodesias to Port Elizabeth and Durban, South Africa ... ..  
 ... .. *Ph. hoplogaster* (GÜNTHER).  
 Subcaudals in ♀♀ 90-111, in ♂♂ 100-120; range : eastern Africa in the Usambara Mtns. north through Kenya to Ethiopia, west to the Nile in the Sudan and Uganda (where it meets with the typical form) ... ..  
 ... .. *Ph. i. battersbyi* LOVERIDGE, 1951.  
 Subcaudals in ♀♀ 114-122, in ♂♂ 120-128; range : Transvaal south to Natal and eastern areas of Cape Province, South Africa ... .. *Ph. natalensis* (A. SMITH).
8. A broad brown dorsal stripe on back and tail; range : Angola (distinguished by its fewer ventrals from *Ph. s. dorsalis* inhabiting same general region) to Rhodesia ... ..  
 ... .. *Ph. i. ornatus* BOCAGE.  
 No such distinct dorsal stripe (unless it may occasionally occur as a recessive character ?) ... .. 9.
9. Subcaudals in ♀♀ 90-117, in ♂♂ 103-122; build moderately slender, more so in ♂♂ than in ♀♀; range : Senegal due east to Metemma (? introduced) on the White Nile, south down the rift valley (Lakes Victoria, Tanganyika, and both sides of Nyasa) following the Zambezi to the East Coast, south of the Zambezi it occurs from Southern Rhodesia west to Damaraland, northwest to Senegal ... ..  
 ... .. *Ph. i. irregularis* (LEACH).  
 Subcaudals in ♀♀ 109-126, in ♂♂ 115-134; build excessively



- slender, and head noticeably narrower than in *Ph. i. irregularis*; range: Khartoum on the White Nile, southeast to mouth of Rovuma River, Tanganyika Territory (? Mozambique also), west to Angola, northwest to Togo, east to the Nile ... .. *Ph. heterolepidotus* (GÜNTHER).
10. Midbody scale rows 13; range Annobon Island, Gulf of Guinea ... .. *Ph. s. girardi* BOCAGE.  
Midbody scale rows 15, very rarely 13 ... .. 11.
11. Ventrals 200-220; subcaudals 156-175; range : Sao Thomé Island, Gulf of Guinea ... .. *Ph. s. thomensis* (BOCAGE).  
Ventrals 154-217; subcaudals 127-161 (117-164 *fide* PARKER : 1949) ... .. 12.
12. Snout usually pale brown; temporals usually 1 + 1, very rarely 2 + 2 or 2 + 3; range : Angola north to Cabinda and possibly Ogowe River, French Congo (intermediates occur at Mwaya on Lake Nyasa) ... .. *Ph. s. dorsalis* (BOCAGE).  
Snout not distinctively colored; temporals usually 1 + 2 (*Ph. s. nitidus*) or 2 + 2 (*Ph. s. semivariiegatus*) ... .. 13.
13. Ventrals 154-165 (Cameroons) to 164-179 (adjacent countries); temporals usually 1 + 2, frequently 1 + 1 or 2 + 2; range: virgin forest areas from Congo Belge westward to Portuguese Guinea (occurs alongside the typical form outside the Cameroons) ... .. *Ph. s. nitidus* (GÜNTHER).  
Ventrals 164-217; temporals usually 2 + 2, occasionally 1 + 1, 1 + 2, 2 + 1 or 2 + 3; range : Eritrea south to Natal and adjacent areas of Cape Province, northwest to Gambia, i. e. all Africa south of 16° N. except Cape Peninsula, etc., etc. ... .. *Ph. s. semivariiegatus* (A. SMITH).

### Genus *Philothamnus*.

1840. *Philothamnus* A. SMITH, Ill. Zool. S. Africa, Rept., footnote to text for pl. lix : genotype *Dendrophis* (*Philothamnus*) *semivariiegata* A. SMITH.
1857. *Chlorophis* HALLOWELL, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia, p. 52 : genotype *heterodermus* HALLOWELL.
- 1866 a. *Herpetæthiops* GÜNTHER, Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. (3), 18, p. 27 : genotype *bellii* GÜNTHER = *heterodermus* HALLOWELL.
1868. *Chlorophis* THEOBALD, Cat. Rept. Asiatic Soc. Mus., p. 49: genotype *oldhami* THEOBALD = *hoplogaster* GÜNTHER.

1895h. *Oligolepis* BOULENGER, Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. (6), 16, p. 171 : genotype *macrops* BOULENGER.

Range. — All Africa — where suitable swamp, bush, savanna or forest conditions occur — south of 16° N., except in the extreme southwest.

### *Philothamnus macrops* (BOULENGER).

1895 h. *Oligolepis macrops* BOULENGER, Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. (6), 16, p. 171 : Usambara Mountains, Tanganyika Territory.

This species was erroneously referred to *Chlorophis neglectus* by WERNER (1895b).

Range. — Coastal region of Tanganyika Territory and adjacent island of Zanzibar.

### *Philothamnus heterodermus carinatus* (ANDERSSON).

1901. *Chlorophis carinatus* ANDERSSON, Svenska Vetensk.-Akad. Hand., 27, N° 5, p. 9 : Mapanga, British Cameroon.

This race was confused with typical *Ph. heterodermus* by MOCQUARD (1897 b) and WERNER (1897 b).

Range. — Virgin forests of western Kenya (Kaimosi) west through the Congo Belge, northwest to Fernando Po (unknown from west of Cameroons).

### *Philothamnus heterodermus heterodermus* (HALLOWELL).

1857. *Chlorophis heterodermus* HALLOWELL, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia, p. 54 : Gaboon = French Congo.

1866 a. *Herpetæthiops Bellii* GÜNTHER, Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. (3), 18, p. 27, pl. VII, fig. B : « Sierra Leone », i. e. Victoria, Sherboro Island, Sierra Leone.

1916 f. *Chlorophis heterodermus Pobeguini* CHABANAUD, Bull. Mus. Hist. Nat. (Paris), 22, p. 371, fig. 12 : French Guinea.

1929. *Chlorophis cyaneus* HECHT, Zool. Anz., 81, pp. 331, 334, figs. 1-2 : Ajoshöhe, Nyong River, British Cameroon.

Besides being referred to as *Ahætulla heteroderma*, this species has appeared as *Philothalmus heterodonta* (sic) SAUVAGE (1884) and *Philothamnus eterodermus* (sic) PRATO (1893).

Range. — Angola north through Congo Belge and west to Portuguese Guinea.



*Philothamnus heterodermus ruandæ* LOVERIDGE.

See p. 2.

Two or three references to this race have appeared as *Chlorophis heterodermus*, from which it is only now separated.

Range. — Virgin forests of southwest Uganda, Belgian Ruanda and adjacent Congo Belge south to Lualaba District.

*Philothamnus hoplogaster* (GÜNTHER).

1863 c. *Ahaxtulla hoplogaster* GÜNTHER, Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. (3), 11, pp. 284, 286 : « Port Natal », i. e. Durban, Natal, South Africa.

1866 b. *Philothamnus neglectus* PETERS, Monatsb. Akad. Wiss. Berlin, p. 890, footnote : « Prazo Boror », i. e. Boror, Mozambique.

1868. *Chlorophis oldhami* THEOBALD, Cat. Reptiles Asiatic Society's Mus., p. 49 : « Simla, India » (in error).

At times referred to as *Philothamnus hoplogaster*, *Ahaxtulla neglecta* and *Cyclophus oldhami*. But both the *Chlorophis hoplogaster* and *C. neglectus* of BOULENGER (1894 a et seq.) were composites containing some *Ph. irregularis battersbyi* material. This confused later workers and led to misidentifications with *Chlorophis natalensis* by BOULENGER (1902b, etc.) and *Philothamnus dorsalis* by WITTE (1933m).

Range. — Eastern Africa south of the Usambara Mountains in Tanganyika Territory, south through Mozambique, southeastern Congo Belge and the Rhodesias to Port Elizabeth, Cape Province, South Africa.

*Philothamnus irregularis battersbyi* LOVERIDGE.

1951 a. *Philothamnus irregularis battersbyi* LOVERIDGE, Bull. Mus. Comp. Zoöl., 106, p. 190 : Sipi, Mount Elgon, Uganda.

Until now this race has appeared as *Chlorophis neglectus*, *C. hoplogaster*, or *C. irregularis hoplogaster* by PARKER (1949a), also misdetermined as *Philothamnus semivariiegatus* by CALABRESI (1918).

Range. — Anglo-Egyptian Sudan east of the Nile, east through Ethiopia, south to (and including) the Usambara Mountains in northern Tanganyika Territory, west to Lake Victoria in the Rift Valley.

*Philothamnus irregularis ornatus* BOCAGE.

1872. *Philothamnus ornatus* BOCAGE, Journ. Sci. Lisboa, 4, p. 80, Huilla, Angola (restricted by BOGERT: 1940).

This is the *Chlorophis ornatus* of BOULENGER and most authors, also possibly the *C. hoplogaster* of MONARD (1937 b), not of GÜNTHER.

Range. — Southwestern Angola to Lialui, Northern Rhodesia.

*Philothamnus irregularis irregularis* (LEACH).

Series I. — Typical *irregularis* with 3 labials entering orbit.

1789. *C(oluber) Cæruleus* LACÉPÈDE (not of LINNÉ, 1758, p. 218 n° 189), Hist. nat. Serpens, 2, pp. 100, 276 : « Cap Vert ».
1802. *Coluber cærulescens* DAUDIN (not of LINNÉ, 1758, p. 227, n° 385), Hist. nat. Rept., 7, p. 54 : *nom. nov.* for *cæruleus* LACÉPÈDE from « Cap Vert ».
1818. *Coluber cæsius* CLOQUET, Dict. Sci. Nat. (Paris), 11, p. 201 : *nom. nov.* for *cæruleus* LACÉPÈDE.
1819. *Coluber irregularis* LEACH, in BOWDICH, Miss. Ashantee, p. 494 : Fantee, Gold Coast.
1840. *Dendrophis (Philothamnus) albo-variata* A. SMITH, Ill. Zool. S. Africa, Rept., pl. LXIV, figs. 3-3b, pl. LXV : South Africa towards Tropic of Capricorn (also Gold Coast ; Sierra Leone ; Gambia).
1843. *Dendrophis Chenonii* REINHARDT, Dansk. Vidensk. Selsk. Skrift., 10, p. 246, pl. I, figs. 13-14 : Guinea.
- 1875 a. *Philothamnus irregularis* var. *longifrenatus* BUCHHOLZ & PETERS, Monatsb. Akad. Wiss. Berlin, p. 199 : Cameroon.
1885. *Ahætulla (Leptophis) frænata* MÜLLER (? lapsus ; not *A. frenatus* GÜNTHER, which = *Uromacer frenatus* of Haiti), Verhandl. Naturf. Ges. Basel, 7, p. 684.
- 1888 a. *Ahætulla emini* GÜNTHER, Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. (6), 1, p. 51 : « Mongbuttu » = Mangbetu, Congo Belge.
- 1888 b. *Ahætulla shirana* GÜNTHER, Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. (6), 1, p. 326 : Blantyre Mission, Shire River, Nyasaland.
1893. ? *Philothamnus Güntheri* PFEFFER, Jahrb. Hamburg. Wiss. Anst., 10, p. 85, pl. I, figs. 3-5 Quilimane, Mozambique.



1923. *Chlorophis bequaerti* SCHMIDT (part : paratype ♀ only), Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., 49, p. 75, fig. 3 : Niangara, Belgian Congo.

1932. *Chlorophis vernayi* FITZSIMONS, V., Ann. Transvaal Mus., 15, p. 38 : Maun, Thamalakane River, British Bechuanaland.

Series II. — An aberrant individual, with only 2 labials entering the orbit, occurring within the range of typical *irregularis* though indistinguishable from the eastern race, *P. irregularis battersbyi*.

1882 c. *Philothamnus angolensis* BOCAGE, Jorn. Sci. Lisboa, 9, p. 7 : Capangombe, Angola.

The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature has been petitioned to set aside *cæsius* CLOQUET, 1818, which has been used but once, in favour of *irregularis* LEACH, 1819, the name commonly employed by herpetologists for over a century and under which this common species has appeared more than 120 times.

As might be expected with so common a reptile, not only has it appeared as *Leptophis chenonii* and *L. c.* var. *albovariata*, but in such combinations as *Chlorophis irregularis*, *Philothamnus irregularis*, *Ph. i. angolensis*, *Ph. i.* var. *güntheri*, *C. güntheri* and *C. shirana*, besides numerous misdeterminations; having been confused with *C. hoplogaster*, *C. neglectus*, *C. natalensis*, *C. heterolepidotus*, and *Ph. nitidus* at various times.

Range. — West and Central Africa south of 15° N., and north of 20° S., but following the Zambezi to the East Coast where it occurs alongside, yet distinct from *Ph. hoplogaster*. Consequently the latter can not be regarded as a race of *Ph. irregularis*, though clearly the southern representative of *P. i. battersbyi*.

### *Philothamnus natalensis* (SMITH).

1840. *Dendrophis (Philothamnus) natalensis* A. SMITH, Ill. Zool. S. Africa, Rept., pl. LXIV, figs. 1-3 : « Port Natal », i. e. Durban, Natal, South Africa.

This snake has also appeared as *Ahætulla irregularis* var. *natalensis*, *A. natalensis*, *Philothamnus natalensis*, *Chlorophis natalensis*, besides being confused with *C. irregularis* by STEINDACHNER (1867 a) and *C. angolensis* by GOUGH (1903).

Range. — Transvaal south to Natal and eastern portion of Cape Province, Union of South Africa.

*Philothamnus heterolepidotus* (GÜNTHER).

- 1863 c. *Ahætulla heterolepidota* GÜNTHER, Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. (3), 11, p. 286 : Africa.  
 1888 b. *Ahætulla gracillima* GÜNTHER, Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. (6), 1, p. 326 : Lower Congo River, Congo Belge.  
 1910 d. *Chlorophis gracilis* STERNFELD, Mitt. Zool. Mus. Berlin, 5, p. 64 : Dodo, French Cameroon.  
 1912 c. *Chlorophis schubotzi* STERNFELD, Wiss. Ergebn. Deut.-Zent.-Afrika-Exped. 1907-1908, 4, p. 269, fig. 4 : Bwanja, near Bukoba, Tanganyika Territory.  
 1923. *Chlorophis bequaerti* SCHMIDT (part : ♂ type), Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., 49, p. 75, fig. 3 : Niangara, Congo Belge.

*C. bequaerti* was based on an aberrant *C. heterolepidotus* ♂ with an entire anal, but the paratype ♀ was a similarly aberrant *C. irregularis*. Besides appearing as *Leptophis heterolepidota*, *Philothamnus heterolepidotus*, *Chlorophis heterolepidotus* and *C. gracillimus*, this species was confused with *C. emini* (= *C. irregularis*) by BOULENGER (1894 a : Nile material) and led to my early (1916 a) mixing of, and ultimately (1937 c) synonymizing of *C. heterolepidotus* with *C. irregularis*; a much to be regretted error. Others have misidentified *C. heterolepidotus* as *C. natalensis* and *C. ornatus*.

Range. — Anglo-Egyptian Sudan from the upper Nile southeast to the mouth of the Rovuma River, Tanganyika Territory (? possibly Mozambique also), west to Angola and northwest to Togo. MONARD's (1940 b) records from Portuguese Guinea — 1,300 miles west of Togo — appear to be based on examples of *Ph. i. irregularis*.

*Philothamnus semivariegatus girardi* BOCAGE.

- 1893 a. *Philothamnus Girardi* BOCAGE, Jorn. Sci. Lisboa (2), 3, p. 46 : « Anno-Bom », i. e. Annobon Island, Gulf of Guinea.

Range. — Annobon Island, Gulf of Guinea.

*Philothamnus semivariegatus thomensis* BOCAGE.

- 1882 b. *Philothamnus thomensis* BOCAGE, Jorn. Sci. Lisboa, 8, p. 302 : Sao Thomé Island, Gulf of Guinea.



Prior to 1882 b this species was referred in error to *A. nitida* and to *C. irregularis*; it was BOGERT (1940) who recognized its close relationship to *Ph. semivariegatus* and made it a sub-species.

Range. — Sao Thomé Island and adjacent islets, Gulf of Guinea.

*Philothamnus semivariegatus dorsalis* (BOCAGE).

1866 a. *Leptophis dorsalis* BOCAGE, Jorn. Sci. Lisboa, 1, pp. 48, 69 : Molembo, Loango Coast, Angola (restricted by BOCAGE : 1882 c).

Referred to as *Philothamnus dorsalis* by PETERS (1876a), *P. s. dorsalis* by BOGERT (1940).

Range. — Angola north to the Congo Belge and possibly French Congo (Lambarene : BOULENGER, 1897b).

*Philothamnus semivariegatus nitidus* (GÜNTHER).

1863 c. *Ahætulla nitida* GÜNTHER (part), Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. (3), 11, p. 286 : No locality.

1872 a. *Ahætulla lagoensis* GÜNTHER, Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. (4), 9, p. 26 : Lagos, Nigeria.

1875 a. *Philothamnus nigrofasciatus* BUCHHOLZ & PETERS, Monatsb. Akad. Wiss. Berlin, p. 199 : Cameroon.

Except for an early reference to *P. irregularis* var. *lagoensis* by BOCAGE (1892a), this snake has been consistently called *P. nitidus* for half-a-century until correctly assigned to its present subspecific rank by MERTENS (1938b). One specimen had been relegated to *P. semivariegatus* by BOULENGER (1906i) and another to *P. s. dorsalis* by WITTE (1941).

Range. — Typically the Cameroons west to Togo, but snakes that are more or less intermediates continue on to Portuguese Guinea, and on the east into the Congo Belge. Apparently a virgin forest form that it being supplanted by the savanna-dwelling *Ph. semivariegatus*, alongside which it occurs in a number of West African localities.

*Philothamnus semivariegatus semivariegatus* (SMITH).

1847. *Dendrophis (Philothamnus) semivariegata* A. SMITH, Ill. Zool. S. Africa, Rept., pls. LIX, LX, LXIV, figs. 1a-b : Bush-

- man Flat, Cape Province (restricted by BOGERT : 1940)  
 « and the country beyond Kurrichane », i. e. Rustenberg,  
 Transvaal.
- 1866 b. *Philothamnus punctatus* PETERS, Monatsb. Akad. Wiss.  
 Berlin, p. 889 : Zanzibar Coast, i. e. Tanganyika Territory.
- 1868 a. *Ahætulla Kirkii* GÜNTHER, Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. (4),  
 1, p. 424 : Zanzibar.
1869. *Dendrophis melanostigma* JAN, Icon. Gen. Ophidiens,  
 livr. 32, pl. II, fig. 3: Mozambique.
- 1882 c. *Philothamnus Smithii* BOCAGE, Journ. Sci. Lisboa, 9,  
 p. 12, fig. 5 : Bissau, Portuguese Guinea (restricted A. L.)  
 and Angola.
- 1888 b. *Ahætulla Bocagii* GÜNTHER, Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. (6),  
 1, p. 326 : Angola.
1893. *Philothamnus punctatus* var. *sansibaricus* PFEFFER,  
 Jahrb. Hamburg. Wiss. Anst., 10, p. 83 : Zanzibar.

Other names under which the Variegated Wood Snake has been known are : *Ahætulla* sp., *A. semivariegata*, *A. punctata*, *Leptophis punctatus*, and *Philothamnus Kirkii*. It has been misidentified as *A. irregularis*, *P. irregularis*, *Chlorophis irregularis*, *C. emini*, while atypical specimens occurring within the range of the typical race have been assigned to *P. p.* var. *thomensis*, *P. thomensis*, *P. dorsalis*, *P. s. dorsalis* and *P. nitidus*. An obvious misprint was that of *P. variegatus* (PERACCA : 1896).

Range. — All Africa south of 16° N. except forested areas bordering the Gulf of Guinea and certain islands therein, also a vague coastal area from French Congo to Angola, besides being absent from the Cape Peninsula; i. e. it ranges from Gambia east to Eritrea (not recorded from Ethiopia), south to Natal and adjacent Cape Province.

(MUSEUM OF COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.)